

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MICHIGAN
SOUTHERN DIVISION

JACK LEROY WINE, JR.,

Petitioner,

Case No. 1:21-cv-86

v.

Honorable Paul L. Maloney

SHANE JACKSON,

Respondent.

OPINION

This is a habeas corpus action brought by a state prisoner under 28 U.S.C. § 2254.

Promptly after the filing of a petition for habeas corpus, the Court must undertake a preliminary review of the petition to determine whether “it plainly appears from the face of the petition and any exhibits annexed to it that the petitioner is not entitled to relief in the district court.” Rule 4, Rules Governing § 2254 Cases; *see* 28 U.S.C. § 2243. If so, the petition must be summarily dismissed. Rule 4; *see Allen v. Perini*, 424 F.2d 134, 141 (6th Cir. 1970) (district court has the duty to “screen out” petitions that lack merit on their face). A dismissal under Rule 4 includes those petitions which raise legally frivolous claims, as well as those containing factual allegations that are palpably incredible or false. *Carson v. Burke*, 178 F.3d 434, 436-37 (6th Cir. 1999). After undertaking the review required by Rule 4, the Court will dismiss the petition without prejudice for failure to exhaust available state-court remedies.

Discussion

I. Factual allegations

Petitioner Jack Leroy Wine, Jr. is incarcerated with the Michigan Department of Corrections at the Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility, (LRF) in Muskegon Heights, Muskegon County, Michigan. On September 11, 2013, following a two-day jury trial in the Calhoun County Circuit Court, Petitioner was convicted of armed robbery, in violation of Mich. Comp. Laws § 750.529. On October 7, 2013, the court sentenced Petitioner as a fourth habitual offender, Mich. Comp. Laws § 769.12, to 25 to 50 years' imprisonment. Petitioner's sentence was to be served consecutively to a sentence for which he was on parole at the time he committed the armed robbery.

Petitioner, with the assistance of counsel, appealed his conviction and sentence. Over the course of the next six and one-half years, Petitioner's appeals continued. He was twice sent back to the trial court for resentencing. Petitioner was twice resentenced to the same sentence initially imposed, most recently on May 25, 2018. By order entered April 29, 2020, the Michigan Supreme Court denied leave to appeal that judgment of sentence. *People v. Wine*, 941 N.W.2d 664 (Mich. 2020).

On January 27, 2021, Petitioner, with the assistance of counsel, timely filed his habeas corpus petition, raising two grounds for relief, as follows:

- I. Trial counsel's performance fell below Sixth Amendment standards: in failing to present a claim of right defense, or to call witnesses, or to use available evidence, and in failing to impeach the state's main witness with a prior conviction. Appellate counsel was ineffective in failing to raise these errors on appeal.
- II. Appellate counsel's performance fell below Sixth Amendment standards in his mishandling of the new evidence claim in the Colby M. Mann affidavit.

(Pet'r's Br., ECF No.1-2, PageID.11.)

II. Exhaustion of State Court Remedies

Before the Court may grant habeas relief to a state prisoner, the prisoner must exhaust remedies available in the state courts. 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b)(1); *O'Sullivan v. Boerckel*, 526 U.S. 838, 842 (1999). Exhaustion requires a petitioner to “fairly present” federal claims so that state courts have a “fair opportunity” to apply controlling legal principles to the facts bearing upon a petitioner’s constitutional claim. *Id.* at 844, 848; *see also Picard v. Connor*, 404 U.S. 270, 275-77 (1971); *Duncan v. Henry*, 513 U.S. 364, 365 (1995); *Anderson v. Harless*, 459 U.S. 4, 6 (1982). To fulfill the exhaustion requirement, a petitioner must have fairly presented his federal claims to all levels of the state appellate system, including the state’s highest court. *O'Sullivan*, 526 U.S. at 845; *Wagner v. Smith*, 581 F.3d 410, 414 (6th Cir. 2009); *Hafley v. Sowders*, 902 F.2d 480, 483 (6th Cir. 1990). The district court can and must raise the exhaustion issue *sua sponte* when it clearly appears that habeas claims have not been presented to the state courts. *See Prather v. Rees*, 822 F.2d 1418, 1422 (6th Cir. 1987); *Allen*, 424 F.2d at 138-39.

Petitioner bears the burden of showing exhaustion. *See Rust v. Zent*, 17 F.3d 155, 160 (6th Cir. 1994). Petitioner acknowledges that the issues raised in habeas ground I have not been exhausted at any level of the state court system. He reports that the issue raised in the second habeas ground has been exhausted at all levels of the state court system.

An applicant has not exhausted available state remedies if he has the right under state law to raise, by any available procedure, the question presented. 28 U.S.C. § 2254(c). Petitioner has at least one available procedure by which to raise the issues he has presented in this

application. He may file a motion for relief from judgment under Mich. Ct. R. 6.500 *et seq.* Under Michigan law, one such motion may be filed after August 1, 1995. Mich. Ct. R. 6.502(G)(1).

Petitioner indicates that he filed such a motion in the Calhoun County Circuit Court on January 25, 2021, raising the same issues he raises here in habeas ground I. If his motion is denied by the circuit court, Petitioner must appeal that decision to the Michigan Court of Appeals and the Michigan Supreme Court. *O'Sullivan*, 526 U.S. at 845; *Hafley*, 902 F.2d at 483 (“[P]etitioner cannot be deemed to have exhausted his state court remedies as required by 28 U.S.C. § 2254(b) and (c) as to any issue, unless he has presented that issue both to the Michigan Court of Appeals and to the Michigan Supreme Court.”) (citation omitted).

Because Petitioner has one issue that is exhausted and some that are not, his petition is “mixed.” Under *Rose v. Lundy*, 455 U.S. 509, 522 (1982), district courts are directed to dismiss mixed petitions without prejudice in order to allow petitioners to return to state court to exhaust remedies. However, since the habeas statute was amended to impose a one-year statute of limitations on habeas claims, *see* 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1), dismissal without prejudice often effectively precludes future federal habeas review. This is particularly true after the Supreme Court ruled in *Duncan v. Walker*, 533 U.S. 167, 181-82 (2001), that the limitations period is not tolled during the pendency of a federal habeas petition. As a result, the Sixth Circuit adopted a stay-and-abeyance procedure to be applied to mixed petitions. *See Palmer v. Carlton*, 276 F.3d 777, 781 (6th Cir. 2002). In *Palmer*, the Sixth Circuit held that when the dismissal of a mixed petition could jeopardize the timeliness of a subsequent petition, the district court should dismiss only the unexhausted claims and stay further proceedings on the remaining portion until the petitioner has exhausted his claims in the state court. *Id.*; *see also Rhines v. Weber*, 544 U.S. 269,

277 (2007) (approving stay-and-abeyance procedure); *Griffin v. Rogers*, 308 F.3d 647, 652 n.1 (6th Cir. 2002).

Petitioner's application is subject to the one-year statute of limitations provided in 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1). Under that provision, the one-year limitations period runs from "the date on which the judgment became final by the conclusion of direct review or the expiration of the time for seeking such review." 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(1)(A). Petitioner appealed his conviction to the Michigan Court of Appeals and the Michigan Supreme Court. The Michigan Supreme Court denied his application on April 29, 2020. It does not appear that Petitioner filed a petition for certiorari to the United States Supreme Court—he reports that the Michigan Supreme Court's order was "the final disposition of [his] direct appeal . . ." (Pet., ECF No. 1, PageID.2.) Even though Petitioner did not file such a petition, the ninety-day period in which he could have sought review in the United States Supreme Court is counted under § 2244(d)(1)(A). See *Bronaugh v. Ohio*, 235 F.3d 280, 283 (6th Cir. 2000). The ninety-day period expired on July 28, 2020. Accordingly, absent tolling, Petitioner would have one year, until July 28, 2021, in which to file his habeas petition. Petitioner filed the instant petition on January 27, 2021, with more than 180 days remaining before expiration of the limitations period.

The running of the statute of limitations is tolled while "a properly filed application for State post-conviction or other collateral review with respect to the pertinent judgment or claim is pending." 28 U.S.C. § 2244(d)(2). The statute of limitations is tolled from the filing of an application for state post-conviction or other collateral relief until a decision is issued by the state supreme court. *Lawrence v. Florida*, 549 U.S. 327 (2007). The statute is not tolled during the time that a Petitioner petitions for writ of certiorari in the United States Supreme Court. *Id.* at 332. Thus, so long as Petitioner's request for collateral review is pending, the time will not count against

him. Thus, from January 25, 2021, until the Michigan Supreme Court rules on his application for leave to appeal to that court, the statute is tolled. The statute of limitations will begin to run again when the Michigan Supreme Court rules on the application for leave to appeal.

The *Palmer* Court has indicated that thirty days is a reasonable amount of time for a petitioner to file a motion for post-conviction relief in state court, and another thirty days is a reasonable amount of time for a petitioner to return to federal court after he has exhausted his state-court remedies. *Palmer*, 276 F.3d at 781. *See also Griffin*, 308 F.3d at 653 (holding that sixty days amounts to a mandatory period of equitable tolling under *Palmer*). Here, because Petitioner filed his motion for relief from judgment before he filed his petition, he really only needs thirty days. In any event, Petitioner has far more than sixty days remaining in his limitations period. Assuming that Petitioner diligently pursues his state-court remedies and promptly returns to this Court after the Michigan Supreme Court issues its decision, he is not in danger of running afoul of the statute of limitations. Therefore, a stay of these proceedings is not warranted and the Court will dismiss the petition for failure to exhaust available state-court remedies. Should Petitioner decide not to pursue his unexhausted claims in the state courts, he may file a new petition raising only his exhausted claim at any time before the expiration of the limitations period.

III. Petitioner's motion for stay and abeyance

Petitioner has moved the Court to stay these proceedings and hold them in abeyance while he exhausts his state court remedies. (ECF No. 2.) For the reasons set forth above, Petitioner's motion will be denied.

IV. Certificate of Appealability

Under 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2), the Court must also determine whether a certificate of appealability should be granted. A certificate should issue if Petitioner has demonstrated a "substantial showing of a denial of a constitutional right." 28 U.S.C. § 2253(c)(2). The Sixth

Circuit Court of Appeals has disapproved issuance of blanket denials of a certificate of appealability. *Murphy v. Ohio*, 263 F.3d 466, 467 (6th Cir. 2001) (per curiam). Rather, the district court must “engage in a reasoned assessment of each claim” to determine whether a certificate is warranted. *Id.*

I have concluded that Petitioner's application is properly denied for lack of exhaustion. Under *Slack v. McDaniel*, 529 U.S. 473, 484 (2000), when a habeas petition is denied on procedural grounds, a certificate of appealability may issue only “when the prisoner shows, at least, [1] that jurists of reason would find it debatable whether the petition states a valid claim of the denial of a constitutional right and [2] that jurists of reason would find it debatable whether the district court was correct in its procedural ruling.” Both showings must be made to warrant the grant of a certificate. *Id.*

I find that reasonable jurists could not find it debatable whether Petitioner's application should be dismissed for lack of exhaustion. Therefore, a certificate of appealability will be denied. Moreover, although Petitioner has failed to demonstrate that he is in custody in violation of the Constitution and has failed to make a substantial showing of the denial of a constitutional right, the Court does not conclude that any issue Petitioner might raise on appeal would be frivolous. *Coppedge v. United States*, 369 U.S. 438, 445 (1962).

Conclusion

The Court will enter an order and judgment dismissing the petition for failure to exhaust state-court remedies, denying Petitioner's motion for stay (ECF No. 2), and denying a certificate of appealability.

Dated: February 4, 2021

/s/ Paul L. Maloney
Paul L. Maloney
United States District Judge